

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-116. (Cancelled)

117. (Currently amended) A method of speed cooking a food product with gas, comprising:

providing a housing defining a cavity comprising ~~defining a cooking chamber~~ having a top wall, a bottom wall, and opposing left and right sides defined by left and right gas discharge plates positioned alongside opposite left and right side walls of the cavity, said left and right discharge plates having gas discharge apertures directed in downwardly convergent directions;

introducing gas into the cooking chamber through the gas discharge apertures in the left and right gas discharge plates such that gas entering the cooking chamber is directed in downwardly convergent directions from the left and right sides of the cooking chamber; and

cooking food product in the cooking chamber by turbulently colliding the downwardly converging gas in close proximity to a surface of the food product.

118. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 117, further comprising heating the gas and exhausting the heated gas through an egress opening in the top wall of the cooking chamber.

119. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 117, wherein the oven has no means for directing gas vertically into the cooking chamber.

120. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 117, wherein the step of cooking the food product is achieved by simultaneously colliding the gas at multiple locations about selected surfaces of the food product.

121. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 117, further comprising operably associating a conduit means with the cooking chamber, and circulating the gas to and from the cooking chamber through the conduit means.

122. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 117, further comprising providing a means for adjustably damping the amount of gas delivered through the gas discharge apertures of the left and right gas discharge plates.

123. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 117, wherein said left and right discharge plates are upper plates, said method further comprising,

providing lower left and right discharge plates at left and right sides of the cooking chamber, respectively, at locations below said upper left and right plates, respectively, said lower left and right discharge plates having gas discharge apertures directed in upwardly convergent directions,

introducing gas into the cooking chamber via the gas discharge apertures in the lower left and right gas discharge plates such that gas entering the cooking chamber is directed in upwardly convergent directions from the left and right sides of the cooking chamber; and

cooking food product in the cooking chamber by turbulently colliding the downwardly converging gas in close proximity to a surface of the food product.

124. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 117, further comprising providing at least one blower motor, and operating the blower motor to force gas through the gas apertures of the left and right gas discharge plates.

125. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 124, wherein the blower motor is a variable speed motor.

126. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 125, wherein the gas is directed in said downwardly convergent directions at a velocity of between about two thousand feet per minute and about six thousand feet per minute.

127. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 125, wherein the gas is directed in said downwardly convergent directions at a velocity of over about two thousand feet per minute.

128. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 125, wherein the gas is directed in said downwardly convergent directions at a velocity of up to about six thousand feet per minute.

129. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 117, further comprising providing a control system for controlling the rate of cooking of the food product.

130. (Currently amended) A system for controlling a flow of gas in an oven having a housing defining a cavity comprising a cooking chamber defined by a top wall, a bottom wall, and opposing left and right sides, comprising:

left and right gas discharge plates defining the left and right sides of the cooking chamber and positioned alongside opposite left and right side walls of the cavity, respectively;

gas discharge apertures in the left and right gas discharge plates for directing gas into the cooking chamber in downwardly convergent directions; and

a control system for controlling the flow of the gas within the oven such that gas introduced into the cooking chamber via the gas discharge apertures moves in

said downwardly convergent directions and turbulently collides in close proximity to a surface of a food product disposed within the oven.

131. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 130, wherein the oven has no means for directing gas vertically into the cooking chamber.

132. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 130, further comprising an egress opening in the top wall of the cooking chamber for exhausting gas from the cooking chamber.

133. (Currently amended) A method of speed cooking a food product in an oven having a housing defining a cavity comprising a cooking chamber having a top wall, a bottom wall, and opposing left and right sides, the method comprising:

directing heated gas through gas discharge apertures in left and right gas discharge plates at the left and right sides of the cooking chamber and positioned alongside opposite left and right side walls of the cavity, respectively, such that gas entering the cooking chamber moves in downwardly convergent directions and collides in close proximity to the food product;

directing microwave energy from the left and right sides of the cooking chamber toward the food product; and

continuing one or both of the directing steps until the food product is cooked.

134. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 133, further comprising exhausting the heated gas through an egress opening in the top wall of the cooking chamber.

135. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 133, wherein the left and right gas discharge plates are upper plates, said method further comprising directing heated gas through gas discharge apertures in left and right lower gas discharge plates at the left and right sides of the cooking chamber, respectively, below the upper left and right gas discharge plates, respectively, such that gas entering the cooking chamber from the gas discharge apertures of the lower left and right gas discharge plates moves in upwardly convergent directions and collides in close proximity to the food product.

136. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 133, wherein no gas is directed vertically into the cooking chamber.